

Environmental Health

Boomsnub/Airco Superfund Site- Hazel Dell PUBLIC HEALTH ASSESSMENT - PUBLIC COMMENT

INTRODUCTION

The State Department of Health (DOH) has evaluated environmental data collected since 1995 from the Boomsnub/BOC Gases (formerly Airco) site. The purpose of this evaluation was to determine whether health effects could occur from exposure to contaminants detected in soil and groundwater at the site. DOH prepared a Public Health Assessment to present the findings of the evaluation.

This fact sheet summarizes DOH's Public Health Assessment findings. To request a copy, call the number listed on the back of this fact sheet.

BACKGROUND

There are two facilities, Boomsnub and BOC Gases at this site. Operations at both facilities resulted in chromium and volatile organic compound contaminated soil. These contaminants went through the soil into groundwater. (Groundwater is contaminated in two aquifers, one shallow and one deep.)

- ◆ **Boomsnub**—a chrome plating facility, that operated at the site until 1994. As a result of its operations, chromium was released to the soil.
- ◆ **BOC Gases**—a gas manufacturing and distributing facility, that still operates at the site. As a result of its operations, volatile organic compounds were released to the soil.

The Washington Department of Ecology (Ecology) installed a treatment system in the shallow aquifer at the site in 1990 to capture and treat the plume of chromium contaminated groundwater. During operation of the treatment system, Ecology discovered that the shallow aquifer was also contaminated with volatile organic compounds. Ecology expanded the groundwater treatment system to extract this contamination.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) took over the site in 1994. Since that time, EPA has removed a large amount of chromium contaminated soils from the Boomsnub property, conducted additional investigations of contamination at the site, and expanded the treatment system in the shallow aquifer.

CONTAMINANTS OF CONCERN

- ◆ **Soil**—metals (mostly chromium) and some organic compounds have been found in soil at Boomsnub and adjacent properties. Volatile organic compounds have been found in soil at BOC Gases.
- ◆ **Groundwater**—metals (mostly chromium) and volatile organic compounds have been detected in groundwater in both aquifers.

EXPOSED POPULATION HEALTH MESSAGE

DOH has determined that no one is currently using or being exposed to contaminated groundwater at this site.

◆ **Shallow aquifer**—private and municipal wells are threatened by contaminated groundwater, therefore, an apparent public health hazard exists. (DOH's third recommendation suggests actions to protect public health.)

◆ **Deep aquifer**—municipal wells do not appear to be threatened by contamination, based on the direction of groundwater movement.

Private wells do appear to be threatened by contamination in the deep aquifer.

Workers are unlikely to be exposed to contaminated soil at facilities next to Boomsnub, where contaminated soil was also detected.

RECOMMENDATIONS

To prevent human exposure to site contaminants, DOH recommends the following:

1. Workers at BOC Gases and facilities next to Boomsnub should be aware of the potential for exposure to contaminated subsurface soil.
2. EPA should continue to define and contain groundwater contamination in the shallow and deeper aquifers and expand its efforts to remove and control the sources of contamination.

3. Private and municipal water supply wells threatened by contaminated groundwater should be monitored closely for metals and volatile organic compounds.
4. A door-to-door survey should be conducted to identify all existing and abandoned wells near the path of contaminated groundwater. Steps should be taken to eliminate existing or abandoned wells that may act to spread contamination between aquifers.
5. DOH should be notified about changes in land or groundwater use, in order to reassess the risks to human health.

FUTURE ACTIVITIES

DOH will work with EPA and the local health department to address the recommendations listed above. **Please provide comments to the address below before the end of the public comment period, November 30, 1999.**

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